T. 876 E only 1608/5877 Daviess

A SERMON

Preached at the ex dono autoris

FUNERAL

OF

Mr. John Wilſon,

LATE

Miniſter of the Goſpel

IN

WARWICK,

Son of Mr. John Wilson ejected from Backford in Cheshire

Who died the 8th, and was interred the 11th day of *April*, 1695.

By *W. TONG*[redacted]

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John 5. 35.

He was a burning and a ſhining Light: and ye were willing to rejoyce for a Seaſon in his Light.

MY Friends, I need not tell you, that it is a very Sorrowful Occaſion we come about this day; the Sad Countenances, and Weeping Eyes, of this great Aſſembly has ſufficiently prevented me: Surely all thoſe that have been Spectators of this Solemnity, muſt diſcern it is not the Funeral of a common Perſon, or at leaſt of one whom we did think, not to be a common Perſon. *The Inhabitants of* Canaan *at* Jacob's Burial, *when* they *ſaw the Mourning in the floor of* Atad, *ſaid, This is a grievous Mourning to the Egyptians*, Gen. 50. 11. And ſuch Reflections, no doubt, will be made on this occaſion: And thoſe that did not know that excellent Perſon whoſe Death we lament, or thoſe that would not know him, will be ready to ſay, *Materiam ſuperbat opus*, here has been more ado than needs, and it is very likely they will ſay, It is rather Love to a Party than any thing elſe, that has brought ſo many People together, and fetch'd ſo many Tears from their Eyes: Whoever think ſo, they were Strangers to him, and ſpeak accordingly.

But he was known to ſome of all Parties amongſt us, and let their Perſwaſion be what it will, I appeal to all that knew him, whether it may not be truly ſaid, A Great Man is this day fallen in our *Iſrael*: But for thoſe that think no Man can be Great that is not of their Mind, or that has not great Titles, Benefices, and Publick Preferments, and ſuch-like Patches of Earthly Grandure, they are not the Perſons to whom I appeal, having no true Senſe of real Excellency.

Let Men think what they pleaſe, not thoſe whom we commend are therefore approved, but whom the Lord commendeth: This Bleſſed Saint lived above both Praiſe and Diſpraiſe while he was here with us, and to be ſure neither the one, nor the other can reach him now.

My Buſineſs is with thoſe that are left behind, it was his deſire ſomething ſhould be ſpoken, for the Improvement of this Sad Occaſion; and I could ſincerely have wiſhed, the Work had been in another hand, that might have better anſwered the Expectations of this great Aſſembly, than I am like to do; who though always unfit for ſuch Work, yet now more eſpecially, when my Spirits labour under diſtracting Sorrows, for the loſs of one of the deareſt Friends I had in the World.

I hope the Text will juſtifie me in what I have ſaid, and may farther ſay concerning him; for it is Chriſt's

Chriſt's own Commendation of *John* the Baptiſt, which abundantly proves that we may give the Faithful Servants of God their juſt Praiſes, and eſpecially when they are got ſafe to Heaven, where our Commendations can neither be an Offence, nor a Snare to them.

In the Verſes foregoing our Bleſſed Lord ſharply reproves the Incredulity of the Jews, that would not acknowledge him to be the Meſſiah, notwithſtanding all the convincing Evidence they had concerning him. Amongſt the reſt, he mentions the Witneſs that *John* bore to that great Truth, *v.* 33. which he tells them, he did not urge, as if he ſtood in need of Humane Teſtimonies, having given them proof of a higher Nature; but he thought fit to put them in mind of what *John* the Baptiſt had ſaid; and that

1. For their Conviction: For (ſays Chriſt) *Ye ſent unto* John, *and he bare witneſs to the Truth.* You believed him to be a Perſon fit to be conſulted, and yet would not receive his report.

2. For the greater Honour of *John* the Baptiſt, and that he might take this occaſion to commend him, *John* always ſpoke honourably of Chriſt, and Chriſt now ſpeaks honourably of *John*; none ſhall be loſers by Chriſt, they that Honour him he will Honour. Though Chriſt need not the Teſtimony of Man, yet he kindly remembers thoſe that ſpeak well of his Name.

In the words we may obſerve three things:

1. What *John* the Baptiſt was; *a Light*, that is, a Miniſter of Chriſt, a Preacher of the Goſpel.

2. What kind of Miniſter he was; *a burning and a ſhining Light*, a well qualified Miniſter.

3. How he was accepted amongſt the People; *Ye were willing to rejoyce in him for a Seaſon.* A little to all theſe.

1. What *John* Baptiſt was; *a Light*, a Miniſter of the Goſpel, the Meſſenger that went before the Face of Chriſt, and told the World, that the long expected One, the deſire of all Nations, was now come; from this his Office he is called a Light; from whence we learn, the Nature of the Goſpel-Miniſtry it is a *Light*. Thus our Saviour *Matt.* 5. 14. *Ye are the Light of the World.* λύχνος φῶς.

There is a peculiar Senſe of the Word, in which it is not to be applied to Miniſters; *John* denies that he was *that* Light, but was ſent to bear witneſs of that Light. Chriſt is the great Light, the *Lux Oriens*, the Miniſtry *Lux Orta*; it is in Chriſt as in the Sun, in the Miniſtry as in the Stars, or as in a Lamp.

The Goſpel-Miniſtry is not called a Light, from any Worldly Luſtre that attends it, the beſt Miniſters have been mean and low, and ſlighted in the World. There is One indeed, that pretends to be the great Light of the Chriſtian World, the grand Miniſter

of

of State, and Vicar of Chriſt upon Earth, and has arrived to a great degree of outward Splendor, his way of ſhining has been to make Kings hold his Stirrup, wait at his Gates, and kiſs his Foot; and he has been a Burning Light too in a very ill Sence, his Ambition having kindled thoſe Flames, that have ſent many Bleſſed Souls to Heaven in Chariots of Fire. But we are aſſured, this dreadful Comet that has blazed ſo long, will in due time fall as Lightning from Heaven, while the true fixed Stars that now ſeem ſo ſmall in compariſon of him, ſhall ſtill ſhine, and be the Light of the World.

There are three things this Metaphor teaches us concerning the Goſpel-Miniſtry.

1. Its Heavenly Original; the great Source and Fountain of Light is above us; and ſome tell us there is no light or heat below, but what has been ſome way derived from the great Orb of Light above: It is certain the Miniſtry of the Goſpel is from Heaven and not of Men; their Authority is from above, Men may point out the Perſons, God gives the Commiſſion, *Eph.* 4. 11. And the Goſpel they preach is from Heaven, it was not contrived in a Cell or a Cloyſter, like the Fables and Fooleries of the Roman Superſtition, but it is the Word and Wiſdom of God, *Even the hidden Wiſdom which God ordained before the World to our Glory*, 1 Cor. 2. 7. To our Glory that preach it, and to yours that hear it,

it, if we preach and hear aright. Some inquiſitive Heads have been asking what God was a doing before the Creation of the World? Himſelf will tell you, He was ordaining the Goſpel to our Glory, which is a glorious Ray of his own Eternal Light: And believe it, when Goſpel-Miniſters preach the Word of God, he does as really and certainly ſpeak by them, as if you ſhould hear his Voice from Heaven, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19.

2. Its great Uſefulneſs: The Sun riſes, and Man goes forth to his labour, by its light he is directed whither to go and what to do: Such is the Goſpel-Miniſtry, as much as it is ſlighted in the World, it is exceeding uſeful to guide us in the matters of our Souls; this, in the hand of the Spirit, guides our Thoughts to judge a right, our Affections to chooſe well, and leads our Feet into the way of Peace; by this we learn to live wiſely and comfortably while we live, and to die ſafely and happily when we die.

And therefore the Miniſtry has been highly valued, and if God has Mercy for us, it will be ſo again: When *Chryſoſtome* was to be ſilenced, the Poor People flock'd together, and cried out, *Satius erat, ut Sol non luceat*, &c. It were better for us the Sun ſhould not ſhine, than that *Chryſoſtome* ſhould not preach. The great Uſefulneſs of a Faithful Miniſtry may be diſcerned by comparing thoſe places that

that have ſuch a Bleſſing with thoſe that want it; where this Light does not ſhine, how lamentably does the groſſeſt Ignorance and Impiety abound, the firſt Chapter to the *Romans* will tell us; there the Prince of Darkneſs Revels and Rules at his pleaſure, but when God ſends a Faithful Miniſtry, there is uſually a Reformation, ſome converted, others civilized, a great many better informed; Bleſſed be God it has not been without theſe Fruits in this place, and much more we hoped for, before the Candleſtick was removed from us.

The Goſpel is a thing of general Uſefulneſs, God makes this Sun to riſe upon the Evil and the Good, and ſends this Rain upon the Juſt and Unjuſt, he has not confined it to any particular Nation, but bid his Miniſters go forth and preach it to every Creature: This Light is free, and ſet up for the ſake of others, the Sun ſhines not for it ſelf, the Lamp is made for the uſe of Men, and the Office of the Miniſtry is for a common Good; they are made Chriſtians for their own advantage, Miniſters for the good of others; and all their Miniſterial Qualifications are for the Church, and not for themſelves alone, 1 *Cor.* 3. ult. and they ſpend and conſume themſelves, while they *ſhine* to others.

3. Its Offenſiveneſs to wicked Men: The light is a Torment to bad Eyes, and hateful to evil Doers, Job. 24. 13, 17. *They are of thoſe that rebel againſt the Light,*

Light, they know not the ways thereof, nor abide the paths thereof. The Morning is unto them as the ſhadows of Death: if one know them, they are in the Terrors of the ſhadow of Death. From hence proceeds the great Oppoſition that is made againſt the Goſpel, *Men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their Deeds are evil,* John 3. 19, 20. *Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his Deeds be reproved.* Ay, that is the true reaſon. Dr. *Preſton* compares it, to bringing a Candle into a Room where Men are doing ſome villainous thing; to be ſure both the Candle, and he that brings it ſhall be kick'd out of Doors, if they be able to do it. I thought it a remarkable Paſſage, which a worthy Miniſter lately told me, How he having ſome Diſcourſe with a Woman that was very Zealous for a particular Opinion, perceived all her labour was laid out that way, and that ſhe was very Ignorant about the great Concernment of Converſion and Regeneration; and he therefore gave her Mr. *Allen*'s Call to the Unconverted; and after a few days ſhe brought it him again, and ſaid, *I do not like this Book, it Judges me.* Here is the great Quarrel of wicked Men with the Goſpel, it ſhews what they are a doing, expoſes and ſhames them, judges and condemns them, and they poor Wretches would not be tormented before their time: The ſame Controverſie that was between *Ahab* and *Micajah*, *I hate him*,

1 Kings 22. 8.

him, says the wicked King, *for he never speaks good concerning me, but evil*; but that was *Ahab*'s fault, and not *Micajah*'s.

But I proceed to the second Point.

2. What kind of Minister *John* the Baptist was; *A burning and a shining Light*; a Person well qualified for his Office.

Here are the two general Properties of Light, Burning and Shining; Burning is first mentioned, as that which seems more intrinsical and essential than Shining; but take them both together, and they tell us what are the due Qualifications of a Gospel-Minister; he is by his Office *a Light*, and should be *a burning and a shining Light*.

1. *A Burning Light*; and that includes three things, which are excellent Qualifications of a Minister, Sincerity, Diligence and Fervency.

1. *A Burning Light*, is a sincere faithful Minister; the Fire that burns is real true Fire, and its burning proves it to be so; you may paint Fire upon the Wall, and it may be made to shine, but it can never burn; nothing can burn, but true Fire. Such a one was *John* the Baptist, a sincere faithful Servant of our Lord Jesus, his Humility and his Self-denial proved his Sincerity; when the People followed him in Multitudes, and all took him for a great Prophet, and even *Herod* himself feared him, fleshly Wisdom would have called this a brave

opportunity to ſet up for himſelf: The People asked him, Art thou that Prophet? meaning the Meſſiah, and were ready to have owned him, and proclaimed him, if he had ſaid he was; but he tells them plainly, he was not; he confeſſed and denied not, but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt: Nay, he farther aſſures them, he was not worthy to unty the Latchet of the Meſſiah's Shoes: He was glad to ſee that Chriſt had more Diſciples than himſelf, and was willing to decreaſe, that Chriſt might increaſe; theſe were undeniable Evidences of Sincerity. And how deſirable a Qualification is this, in a Miniſter, to be hearty and ſincere in love to Chriſt, and to the Souls of Men, like *Timothy*, naturally caring for their State: It becomes Miniſters to prove themſelves, as to their Sincerity; when *Peter* was a ſending out on the Paſtoral Work, our Saviour tries him, Simon, *Son of* Jonas, *loveſt thou me*, and again, *loveſt thou me*, and a third time, and when *Peter* could from his Heart ſay, *Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee*; then ſays Chriſt, *Go and feed my Sheep*. We ſhould put our ſelves upon the trial, and ſo go forth to feed the Flock of Chriſt. Certainly an Hypocritical Miniſter is the worſt Hypocrite in the World, and moſt like to him that tranſforms himſelf into an Angel of Light for his own ends: The Apoſtle compares a Perſon, that has the higheſt Gifts, but is without Charity (that is, true love

Ch. 3. 29.

John 21. 15.

Rev John Wilson

love to God, and to Men for God's ſake) to a ſounding Braſs and a tinkling Cymbal, a Muſical Inſtrument; a Skilful Hand may pleaſe himſelf, and delight others, with playing on it, but the Inſtrument it ſelf is a ſenſleſs lifeleſs thing, and has no Senſe or Pleaſure therein: So God may make uſe of an Hypocritical Miniſter, and his Gifts, to comfort and refreſh the Souls of others; but the Man himſelf has no Benefit, nor Comfort, to himſelf thereby: It's a happy thing when the Miniſterial Light, is a burning Light, True and Sincere; *Paul* took comfort in this when envious Men accuſed him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with*, &c. he was ſincere in Heart, and ſincere in his Work, *not walking in Craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully:* And elſewhere, *For we are not as many that corrupt the Word of God, but as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. 1 Cor. 13. 1. 2 Cor. 4. 2.

2. *A Burning Light*, is a diligent active Miniſter; Fire is a very active thing, and its Burning is its Activity; it is always working on it ſelf, or ſomething elſe; and therefore *a burning Light* is a fit Emblem for a diligent Miniſter, that is always at work either upon others or himſelf. Such a one was *John* the Baptiſt, his hands were always full, as we may obſerve, from what is ſaid of his Preaching and Bap-

tizing so many. *Mat.* 3. 5. *Then went out to him all* Judea *and* Jerusalem, *and all the region about* Jordan, *and were baptized of him, confessing their sins.* All this could not be done, without abundance of labour.

This holy Diligence is required of every Minister, and without this, it is impossible for us to give up our Account with Joy; 'tis a very Solemn Charge, that *Paul* gives to *Timothy*, the Lord write it on all our Hearts, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. *I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.* It is a sharp Reprimand God gives to sloathful Ministers, *Isa.* 56. 10. *They are dumb Dogs, that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*

The great Shepherd of the Sheep, has left us a Pattern of unwearied Diligence, he was always about his Father's business, and it is observable, the
Joh. 8. 57. Jews spoke of him as if they took him to be near 50 Years old, when he was not much above 30; and some give this reason for it, That with constant Labours he had so macerated his Body, that he looked to be many Years older than he was. It was an excellent Person, that writ upon his Closet-door, *Minister verbi es, hoc age.* Thou art a Minister of God's Word. Mind it.

3. A

Rev John Wilson

3. A burning Light, is a fervent zealous Minister; there's heat as well as light. Such a one *John the Baptist* certainly was; observe his Zeal in reproving the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were persons that had a very high opinion of themselves, and therefore would be very impatient of a just Reproof. *Mat.* 3. 7, 8. Nay, he spared not *Herod* himself, but withstood him to his Face, and that for his darling Sin. And this zealous Preacher, made zealous Hearers, and revived that old Spirit of Godliness, that had been so long languishing amongst the Jews, as I gather from *Mat.* 11. 12. *From the time of* John the Baptist, *until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Before *John*'s Preaching, Men were grown cold and careless in the Matters of the Kingdom of Heaven; but, by his warm Preaching, he thaw'd and melted a frozen Generation, and they had been warm ever since, the impressions were still upon them when Christ spoke those words.

This is very necessary and highly commendable, to see a Minister warm and serious in Praying, Preaching, in all the parts of his Work, doing it with all his Heart and with all his Mind. And without this Zeal, the Gospel preached, seldom profits; Flame kindles Flame, but a careless cold Spirit in such a Work, makes more Atheists than Converts. Fervent Preachers are the Men that

God

God uſually bleſſes, and owns to be his Miniſters, *Iſa.* 62. 6. *I have ſet Watchmen upon the Walls, O Jeruſalem.* Well, what kind of Men are they that God ſets upon the Walls? Why, they are ſuch as *ſhall never hold their peace, day nor night*, &c. It was the commendation of *Apollos*, That he, being fervent in Spirit, ſpoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord. *Paul* could part with the Church of *Epheſus* more comfortably, becauſe he could ſay, That, by the ſpace of three Years, he had not ceaſed to warm every one with Tears. It is worth our while to obſerve with what fervency he perſwades men, *Rom.* 12. 1. *I beſeech you therefore, by the Mercies of God*, &c. And *Phil.* 2. 1. *If there be therefore any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be like-minded.* He pleads as one that would take no denial. He that writes the Life of good Mr. *Hieron*, tells us, He uſed to quicken himſelf to his Work, by writing on his Notes and Books ζήλωσον, be thou zealous. Of all Perſons, a Miniſter of the Goſpel had need to learn that word by Heart; not ſloathful in Buſineſs, but fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord. So much for the firſt part of the Character, *A Burning Light.* Miniſterial Graces.

2. He was *a ſhining Light*, one that had Miniſterial Gifts, as well as Graces; ſo ſome diſtinguiſh

guiſh betwixt burning and ſhining: But, without too much nicety, I ſuppoſe three things are included in this Phraſe, Judiciouſneſs, Plainneſs, Exemplarineſs.

1. *A ſhining Light*, is a judicious Miniſter; the Light which he holds forth to others, ſhines inwardly on his own mind, as we have it in 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. *For God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our Hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt.* Thoſe are moſt like to inſtruct others, that have been inlightened themſelves: This was foretold of *John the Baptiſt*, that he ſhould be a perſon of great wiſdom. *Luke* 1. 15. He ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt; he ſhall go before him in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*: And Chriſt ſays of him, *Among them that are born of Women, there hath not riſen a greater than* John the Baptiſt. It is very much to be deſired, that every Scribe were well inſtructed in the things of the Kingdom, a Workman that needed not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; but ſuch as theſe have been always rare in the Church of God, and the want of them, has given occaſion to the Enemy to ſow Tares. It was *Timothy*'s Honour and Happineſs, that from a Child he was acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, 2 *Epheſ.* 3. 15, 16. And he reaped a twofold advantage by it, the one Perſonal, Mat. 11. 11.

ſonal, he was thereby made wiſe to Salvation; the other Miniſterial, for thereby the Man of God is throughly furniſhed unto all Good Works.

Where a diſcerning Spirit, and a great Acquaintance with Scripture meet together, there you have the judicious Miniſter: I have often thought of what I once heard from an excellent aged Miniſter, at whoſe Feet this our dear Brother for ſome time ſate, ſpeaking of acquaintance with Scripture, he ſaid, *I thank God for what ſhare of Humane Learning I have had, but I value it not of a Straw, in compariſon of that little acquaintance God has given me with his Holy Word.* A ſound judicious Miniſter, is a a great Bleſſing to the Church; for want of ſuch ſhining Lights, many crude and corrupt Opinions have been taught for Doctrines, and the Blind lead the Blind, and, without infinite mercy, both are like to fall into the Ditch.

NB.

2. *A ſhining Light*, is a plain convincing Preacher; one that has the gift of utterance and can expreſs himſelf clearly, and to the capacity of the meaneſt hearer; ſuch a one was this *John the Baptiſt*, obſerve how plainly and roundly he deals with the People, *Mat.* 3. Some perſons have tolerable good Conceptions, but wrap them up in ſuch cloudy unhappy Phraſes, as if they ſtudied not to be underſtood: *Paul* makes it one of the Qualifications of a Goſpel-miniſter, that he be διδακτικος, apt to teach.

teach. This is a great gift of God, and uſually it accompanies a good clear Judgment: The deeper the Engraving is upon the Seal, the clearer will the Impreſſion be upon the Wax; and uſually the more fully we underſtand a thing, the more plainly we can expreſs our ſelves about it.

A Miniſter's Light ſhould ſhine to all round about, and not be pent up in the dark Lanthorn of uncouth Expreſſions. What the Apoſtle ſays, about ſpeaking in an unknown Tongue, holds true here; for unintelligible Engliſh, is as much an unknown Tongue, as any foreign Language whatſoever, 1 *Cor.* 14. 8, 9. *If the Trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the Battel? So likewiſe you, except you utter by the Tongue words eaſie to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? for ye ſhall ſpeak into the air.* The Meſſage which we bring is ſo great and good, we need not ſtand ſo much upon fine unuſal Phraſes. 2 *Cor.* 3. 12. *Seeing then we have ſuch hope, we uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech.* A clear convincing way of Preaching, by ſtrong Scriptural Reaſon, a Natural Method, plain and apt Words, is certainly the beſt for all ſorts of Hearers, and is as grateful to the Judicious, as it is profitable to the Ignorant.

3. *A ſhining Light*, is an Exemplary Miniſter, whoſe Converſation ſhines as well as his Doctrine; *John* was a perſon of great ſtrictneſs of Life, and

without this, none can be truly excellent: It is the great unhappiness of the Church of God, that there are so many called Ministers, that set up a little light by their Preaching, and then presently extinguish it, by unbecoming actions. Ministers would be a Pattern to the Flock, 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. *Paul*, at his parting with the *Ephesians*, appeals to them, *Ye know from the day that I came into* Asia, *after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind.* Our Saviour charges his Disciples, that since they were, by their Holy Calling, to be the Light of the World, they should let their light so shine before Men, that others, seeing their good works, might glorifie God. It's a brave thing to see Ministers so Preach and so Live, as that the very Enemy shall be forced to say, *These are the Servants of the Living God, which shew unto Men the Way of Salvation.*

Mat. 5. 16.

We proceed to the third thing.

3. How *John the Baptist* was accepted amongst the People, *Ye were willing for a Season to rejoyce in his Light*: Wherein we see,

1. Their Affection towards him; You were willing to rejoyce in him. A faithful Minister is to be received with Joy, as one of the greatest Blessings in the World; the Message which they bring, is of such high concernment to the Souls of

of Men, that we ſhould all ſay, *Bleſſed be he that comes to us in the Name of the Lord.*

2. The limitation of it, Ye were willing *for a ſeaſon* to rejoyce in it. This may be applied, either to their affection to him, or their enjoyment of him; and ſo may be taken either,

1. As their fault, as if he ſhould ſay, At firſt you ſeemed to be very fond of *John*, to rejoyce in him, and to flock after him; but your kindneſs was but for a ſeaſon, when you ſaw that he was not approved of by your great Men, and that he turned his Back upon the grandure of the World, you changed your minds and ſlighted him. If this be the meaning, it was ſpoken to their ſhame, that they, who flock'd after him ſo much at firſt, ſhould ſoon grow weary of him; and yet he was not the only Miniſter that has been ſo ſerved, *Paul* tells the *Galatians* how he had obſerved a great change in their Countenances towards him, *Gal.* 4. 14, 15. Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? For I bear you record, if it had been poſſible, you would have pluck'd out your own Eyes and given them to me. Am I therefore become your Enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth? Chriſt himſelf was ſometimes mightily followed, and ſometimes left almoſt alone.

2. As their loſs, *q. d.* you were willing to rejoyce in him for his ſeaſon, but it was but a very

ſhort ſeaſon that he ſtay'd with you; *John* had his Day, and he burned and ſhined in it, but a Night ſoon came, and then his Light and your Joy went out together; ſometimes what we moſt rejoyce in, is ſooneſt gone from us. How comes this to paſs? Why,

1. Thoſe that attain to a great deal of Grace in a little time, are ſooneſt gone; for when God's work is finiſhed in them, why ſhould they ſtay any longer here? God keeps his Servants in the outer Court, till he has dreſs'd them up and made them meet to enter into the holieſt, and then he opens the Door and takes them in: And if we ſee, that they are ſoon ready, we need not wonder if they be ſoon gone: When we ſee one Grace added to another, and the Soul abounding in them all, we may expect a ſpeedy entrance will be adminiſtred to them into the Kingdom, 2 *Pet.* 1. 11.

2. Thoſe that have done a great deal of work in a little time, are ſooneſt gone; for when their work is done, what ſhould hinder them from their reſt? If God's work be finiſhed in them, and their work finiſhed for God, there is nothing further to be done here, and God will not keep them from their home.

Sometimes, an unkind World helps them forward by its malice, and ſends them ſooner to their Father's Houſe, howbeit it meaneth not ſo.

Thus

Thus I have ſet before you, the lively Pourtraicture of a Goſpel-Miniſter, *A burning and a ſhining Light*, rejoiced in for a ſeaſon and then removed. An upright, diligent, zealous Miniſter, *A burning Light:* And a judicious, convincing, exemplary Preacher, *A ſhining Light.*

Such a one *John* was; ſuch a one every Miniſter of the Goſpel ſhould be. But have we any ſuch amongſt us now, in this degenerate Age, in theſe parts of the World?

My Friends, We had one, not long ago; but now we have loſt him, and this Day we are lamenting the Death of ſuch a one as has been deſcribed; certainly this Character ſuited him as well, as if it had been made for him; but he has left us and our ſeaſon of enjoying him, and rejoycing in him is now over.

I appeal to you that knew him:

1. Was he not *a Burning Light?* had he not a large meaſure of Miniſterial Graces? did you ever know a perſon that gave greater evidence of his Sincerity, both living and dying? Such Humility, with ſuch high Attainments, I ſcarcely know where to find, now he is gone. How have I heard him, when he has been to Preach, humbling himſelf before the Lord! Who am I, that I ſhould ſpeak in thy Name, to a great Congregation!

And

And, tho' his whole Life was free from any remarkable blemiſh, yet, when he came to die, how deeply was he humbled! His own Words were, *I have been, for ſome Days paſt, endeavouring to get the great Work done:* (I believe he meant, Renewing his Repentance and his Covenant) *And*, ſays ſays he, *it has been a Time to bring to remembrance, I have not carried it towards my God as I ſhould have done; but he has humbled me to the Duſt, and, through his infinite Mercy, and the Merits of my dear Saviour, I have great hope, and that comfort which I would not be without for ten Worlds. I hope the Work was done before, but I thought it beſt, to go roundly to work with my Soul; and God has given me the comfort of it.* And, to one that ſtood by, *Oh, Sir! it's a great thing to ſtand upon the brink of one World, ready to paſs into another, and have Comfort in ſuch an Hour.* Many things might be obſerved, both in his Life and Death, which ſhewed him to be an *Iſraelite* indeed, in whom there was no guile.

Was he not a diligent Miniſter, I had almoſt ſaid, too diligent; or, perhaps, we might have enjoy'd him longer? His great Labours amongſt you, will witneſs for him, tho' he was with you in much weakneſs of Body, almoſt ever ſince he came amongſt you, yet he ſeem'd to forget it, when he was in his Work; and when ſome Relations adviſed to deſiſt, and retire into the Country, he would

would say, *If I should do so, and it should be a means to prolong my Life, what good would my Life do me, if I should be useless?* And I cannot forget, how, when I lately told him, what a worthy Minister said to me, *That he had advised him three Years ago, to lay aside his Ministry, and betake himself to the Study of Physick, or something that his Constitution would better bear.* He quickly replied, *I would not have done it for ten Lives.* And would say, *I am sensible, if I had not been engaged in the Ministry, I might have lived longer; but I do not repent, for I would rather live but half a Life in the Work of the Ministry, than a whole Life in any other Employment.* Vs.

I appeal to you, Was he not a fervent zealous Preacher? 'Tis true, he affected not an artificial Fervour, or a stentorian Voice; you should never perceive his Thoughts in a hurry, or Spirits in a violent agitation; but he always spoke with a sweet, serious, warmth of Spirit, that melted the Hearts of hearers, and like a gentle Shower, drenched deeper than a violent Storm would do.

2. Was he not a shining Light? What Ministerial Gift was there wanting in him? Judicious, above any of his Years, that I ever knew; where you had a happy conjunction of a very great share of Humane Learning and intimate Acquaintance with the Scriptures and Mysteries of the Kingdom; and these Jewels were set in the Ring of

quick and ſolid Ingeny. I need no other witneſs, than the Experience of thoſe that converſed with him, and thoſe weighty Sermons and Expoſitions he delivered from this Place, in which you ſhould hear nothing but what deſerved to be writ in Letters of Gold, and laid up for ever.

Clear and plain in what he ſpoke; the moſt happy Man in expreſſing great things in an eaſie proper Phraſe, that ever I heard; a Child might
N. underſtand him, and the greateſt Divine would ſee cauſe to admire it. And might we be ſo happy, as to receive his Labours from the Preſs, I am perſwaded they would be as acceptable things, to all ſerious ſenſible Chriſtians, of what Party ſoever, as have been ſent abroad theſe many Years.

And that which crowned all, He was very exemplary, both as a Miniſter, and a Chriſtian; and I may appeal to this Place, where he has ſpent almoſt four Years, What one thing they ever ſaw in him, that was unbecoming? He was another *Demetrius*, that had a good Report of all Men, yea, and of the Truth it ſelf; and we alſo bear record, and ye know that our Record is true, 3 Epiſt. *John* 12. And I muſt own it; his Lot was caſt amongſt a People of that civility, that, notwithſtanding different Perſwaſions, all of them, as far as I have heard, have done him that right, to carry it reſpectfully to him while he lived, and

to

to ſpeak honourably of him now he is gone.

All this he was, and much more might be ſaid, but I forbear; bleſſed be God, that has given ſuch Grace to Men, and ſo clear a Confutation of all the Calumnies of an Atheiſtical Age, as if Religion were but a cunningly deviſed Fable, and the Miniſtry a meer Trade to live by. Here was one, that lived up to the Goſpel-Rules while he lived, and could chearfully truſt to Goſpel-Promiſes when he died.

Let me add a word or two of Advice to thoſe that remain, and I have done.

1. To you, the Sorrowful Relations of this bleſſed Saint, I confeſs, I could better tell how to ſit down and mourn with you, than comfort you under this great Affliction; and yet, I beſeech you, remember, the time is ſhort, it remains, that they that weep ſhould be as if they wept not; God has greatly honoured you, in giving you ſuch a Son, ſuch a Brother; if God did not think him too good for you, you have no reaſon to think him too good for God; he has left a World, wherein there were few or none, but what were beneath him in Holineſs; he's gone to Company ſuitable for him. Yet a little while, and you ſee him not; and again, a little while, and you ſhall ſee him: When God has finiſhed his Work in you, you ſhall be with him where he is. Do not

ſay, when you return, You have left your dear Relation behind you in the Duſt; it's he that's gone to his Native Country, and has indeed left you behind; he is well, he is where he would be; remember, he ſmiled as he was going, and told you, *Tho' he loved you dearly, he could freely leave you*; and ſweetly ſaid, *his dying Affections towards you were not weaker, but ſtronger than before:* But they were overcome by ſtronger Affections of another Nature.

2. To my Reverend Brethren in the Miniſtry. Here we have both an Occaſion of Sorrow, and the faireſt Pattern for our imitation; God has weakned our ſtrength in the way, by ſhortning his days. He was a true lover of his poor Brethren; the moſt of us fell ſo far ſhort of him, and we rejoyced and thought our ſelves happy in him; he was the Glory of the Diſſenting Miniſtry in *Warwickſhire.* Let us all be reaching at his Mantle; it will be worth our moſt earneſt Endeavour, to get his Spirit both in Preaching and Living: He knew what he ſaid, that wiſhed rather for the Divine Eloquence of *Auguſtine,* than the Empire of *Auguſtus*; and he deſerves not the Name of a Miniſter, that would not chuſe the Miniſterial Gifts of this excellent Perſon, before the beſt Preferment in the Kingdom. I remember what I once heard from our Dear Brother, when one was thanking him

for

Rev John Wilson

for a Sermon, and ſaid innocently, *God had made him an excellent Preacher*; he modeſtly refuſed the Character, ſaying, *Alas, I am ſenſible I fall far ſhort of a good Preacher; but this, through Grace, I can ſay, I would rather be a good Preacher, than a Prince.*

My Brethren, tho' I have not been many Years amongſt you, yet I have lived to bury four aged worthy Miniſters in this County; and now God has begun to break in upon the young ones; the Lord help us to work the harder; becauſe fewer hands are now at work, let us not be ſloathful, but followers of thoſe, that, through Faith and Patience, inherit the Promiſes. God is making the Glory of *Jacob* thin; it is time for us to look to our Maker, and to have reſpect to the Holy One of *Iſrael.* We are as when one has gathered the Summer Fruits, our choiceſt ones are removed from us; the louder Call have we to greater diligence. Is. 17 4. to 7.

3. What ſhall I ſay to this broken Congregation, that is as a Flock without a Shepherd? I am diſtreſſed for you, and a hearty ſharer in your Loſs and Grief: Suffer a Word of Exhortation.

1. Thank God, that ſet up ſuch a Burning and Shining Light in your Candleſtick; that ever you had ſuch a Miniſter; it was a Special Providence that brought him amongſt you; a ſtranger

to you; brought ſo far from amongſt Relations and Friends, that highly eſteemed him, and were loath to part with him; if greater offers of outward encouragement could have kept him there, you had never enjoyed him; but God ſent him to you; and you were accounted a happy People, while you had him, by all that knew him: You were the Envy of other Places and Congregations, much larger than your own; but here God fixed him, and he was well pleaſed with it; here he burned and ſhined, till he had ſpent the Oyl of Life: Bleſs God, that ever you ſaw him: Remember him now he is gone; he taught you many excellent Doctrines, learn them; you received many ſuitable Directions from him, live them over now he is dead; you heard many ſerious and weighty things from him in private Diſcourſe, conſider them well; you ſaw many excellent things in his Converſation, go you and do likewiſe *thoſe things*
Phil. 4. 9. *which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in him, do, and the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

2. Enquire how it comes to paſs, that you have loſt him ſo ſoon. God is contending with this Town: You have ſeen your Houſes laid in Aſhes, and now God has made his own Houſe to ſhake amongſt you; God grant that may not fall too. Remember your Miniſter's words, *Hear the Rod*

and

and who has appointed it: Be zealous and repent.

I know many of you are greatly to be commended; you rejoyced in your faithful Paſtor, not for a ſeaſon only, but as long as you enjoyed him, he was ſenſible of your tender reſpect, and owned it as the Mercy of God to him; his words were, *I bleſs God for ſome, and I pray for all.*

But have you improved in practical Religion, ſuitably to what you have enjoyed? You know, Sirs, it was not Zeal for a Party and for controverted Opinions, that he called you to, but ſubſtantial, powerful Godlineſs in Heart and Life, without partiality, without hypocriſie; it is in this therefore that you muſt let your profiting appear unto all Men. You muſt in your ſphere, burn and ſhine too, that it may appear, he did not ſpend his Light in vain amongſt you; ſhew forth ſuch a Spirit, ſuch a Life, as that which he ſpent amongſt you was.

Let what God gave you in him, engage you to prize the Goſpel, and to entertain it ſtill amongſt you, in that purity of Adminiſtrations you have enjoyed. Now I think I may boldly call you to it; Some of you were ſtrangers to this Way, when your departed Miniſter firſt came amongſt you; but now, you know, it is not what ſome others have been pleaſed to repreſent it, and if you ſhould now withdraw from it, you caſt a great reflection upon your Miniſter that's gone, as if you loved him ſo little, that you do not deſire another. If

If you hunger and thirſt after your Spiritual Food, you may ſtill enjoy it, and the ſame Goſpel, tho' you have not the ſame Miniſter; let not the Lamp of your Profeſſion and your Zeal expire with your Miniſter's Life; your Conſciences muſt tell you, 'tis a good Cauſe and a good Way; the Lord God of Gods he knows, and *England* ſhall know, that it is not for Sedition or Faction, that we meet here: You know, nothing has been preached amongſt you, but the Word of Truth and Soberneſs, therefore be not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and be ſure you do not prove a Shame and Reproach to it. I conclude with the Words of dying Mr. *Bolton* to his Children, when they ſtood weeping about him: *I charge you, That none of you dare to meet me, at the great Day, in an unconverted State.* Oh! Remember what your Miniſter has ſaid, time after time, concerning the Neceſſity of Serious Converſion to God, and do not dare to meet him, at that Day, in an unconverted State.

F I N I S.